

City of Alexandria, Virginia

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5-13-03

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 8, 2003

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WORK GROUP

ISSUE: Consideration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Work Group recommendations regarding a memorial to Dr. King in the City of Alexandria.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That City Council:

- (1) Receive the Work Group's report which recommends that: (a) a permanent memorial to Dr. King be established in the City; (b) as part of the planned renovation of Market Square, a bench with a bronze sculpture of Dr. King sitting on the bench be installed in a garden area that is lighted, secure and visible; (c) an interactive historical display which provides in-depth information on Dr. King be installed at the Black History Resource Center; and (d) this report be distributed to all civic associations and set for public hearing on June 14 and Council action on June 24. The bench would be similar to the one in front of the Printing Industries of America building on Diagonal Road (see attachment for picture); and
- (2) Consider providing a small amount of City funds toward this memorial, with the remaining funds being raised by the Work Group which is committed to doing so.

BACKGROUND: At the October 9, 2001 City Council meeting, Council authorized the creation of a Martin Luther King, Jr. Work Group to work, under the auspices of the Martin Luther King Memorial Planning Committee, on recommendations for a permanent memorial to Dr. King in the City. The Work Group's mission is to determine whether a memorial is appropriate, and if so, to consider the type of memorial and possible locations.

The Work Group included three members from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Planning Committee, two members of City Council (Vice Mayor William Cleveland and Councilman William Euille), and one representative from the following groups: Alexandria Black and

Hispanic Concerned Women, Alexandria Interfaith Association, Alexandria NAACP, Alexandria Youth Council, and the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce. The Work Group's initial meeting was held on November 20, 2001. During that meeting the Work Group adopted a statement of work that would lead to recommendations with respect to:

- whether a permanent memorial to Dr. King in Alexandria is appropriate, and if so, the purpose to be achieved by the memorial;
- the general nature of the memorial;
- potential locations for the memorial;
- potential funding sources for the memorial; and
- a process for ensuring that the memorial becomes a reality.

DISCUSSION: The Work Group held its first meeting on November 29, 2001, and continued to meet through February 12, 2003. The Group decided that a permanent memorial to Dr. King was appropriate in the City of Alexandria. During its deliberations, the Work Group considered the various alternative formats for a memorial, including a statue or some other commemorative presence such as a garden, a plaque in a meaningful location, media presentation/educational center, or the naming/renaming of a street or City facility. Four potential locations for a memorial were reviewed which included the Black Heritage Park, Delaney Gardens in the PTO complex, Oronoco Bay Park, and Market Square.

A briefing was held on November 7, 2002 to advise the community of the Work Group's mission and seek citizen input on the options for a memorial (Attachment 2). Following the briefing, which was attended by 20 to 25 citizens, the consensus was that a permanent memorial should be erected in the City and that the memorial should be in a prominent location accessible to citizens and visitors.

The Work Group concluded that a Martin Luther King, Jr. sculpture, similar to the "Ben Franklin" in front of the Printers Association was appropriate for siting in one of the planters in the renovated Market Square. The garden setting would allow individuals to sit and contemplate Mr. King's life in a highly visible area that is frequently visited by residents and visitors. The Work Group's backup or alternate site is the Black Heritage Park.

The Work Group believes that Market Square is also a good location because of the historic activities that occurred there. Slaves were sold in Market Square prior to the beginning of trading at upper Duke Street sites slightly later in the 19th century. According to Director of Historic Alexandria Jean Federico, three specific sales occurred in the Square. Historic Alexandria Office staff welcome a presentation, using a large screen computer, in the Watson Reading Room of the Black History Resource Center, which will provide an interactive historical

media display to complement the statue.

Staff contacted representatives of the Printing Industries of America to obtain information about the sculpture in front of their building. "Ben Franklin" is a George W. Lundeen sculpture. Mr. Lundeen notes that the sculpture was one of a limited edition of 21. Those pieces were \$45,000 each. He estimates the cost of an original, one-of-a-kind sculpture to be \$150,000 to \$200,000.

If Council were to approve the Work Group's recommendations, and when and if a reasonable portion of the funding needed for the sculpture were pledged, we would proceed as follows, adhering to the City's Policy on Acquired Gifts:

- An open competition would be held for an artist who would design the sculpture.
- Public comment would be invited on the artists who enter the competition and the preliminary design they have submitted.
- An artist would be chosen by the Work Group (likely with its membership's supplemented by additional members).
- The City would enter into a contract with the artist which would clearly specify the items to be delivered by the artist and the items to be delivered by the City (e.g., other nearby benches, landscaping, pavers).
- The Work Group would receive and review periodic reports from the artist on his/her progress, as would City staff to ensure complete compatibility between the sculpture and the planned renovations of Market Square.
- The Work Group would eventually accept the artist's final work.

The Work Group is committed to raising the necessary funds, via a public/private partnership, to cover the costs of the sculpture and the interactive historical display at the Black History Resource Center. Grants from foundations will be sought and private donations will be solicited. Several of the civic associations represented at the community briefing indicated a willingness to make financial contributions in support of this project.

FISCAL IMPACT: None at this time.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1. Graphic of "Ben Franklin"

Attachment 2. Briefing Paper for Community Groups

STAFF:

Rose Williams Boyd, Director of Citizen Assistance

George W. Lundeen

Lundeen Sculpture

"Ben
Franklin "

Pewter

8" x 10" x 7"

Bronze Edition
of 1990



To place an order or for more information contact:

Lundeen Sculptures, Ltd.

338 E. 4th Street
Loveland, Colorado 80537
(970) 669-7176

Or

E-Mail george@lundeensculpture.com

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City of Alexandria, Virginia



November 6, 2002

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WORK GROUP
BRIEFING PAPER

Statement of Work:

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Work Group was established by City Council in October 2001 to make recommendations to the Council regarding a permanent memorial to Dr. King to be located in the City. Specifically, the Work Group will address and make recommendations regarding:

- (1) whether a permanent memorial to Dr. King is appropriate;
- (2) the general nature of the memorial;
- (3) potential locations for the memorial;
- (4) potential funding sources for the memorial; and
- (5) a process for ensuring that the memorial becomes a reality.

Consensus Items:

- There should be a permanent memorial in Alexandria to Dr. King
- Memorial can take the form of a statue or some other commemorative presence such as a garden, plaque in a meaningful location, media presentation/educational center, or the naming/renaming a street or City facility
- Potential locations for a memorial being considered by the Work Group are:
 - Black Heritage Park
 - Market Square
 - Delaney Gardens in the PTO complex
 - Oronoco Bay Park